

Message Text

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71

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FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2542

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

C O N F I D E N T I A L THESSALONIKI 0062

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: STATUS OF GREEK MUSLIMS IN THRACE

1. A SMALL, TURKISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER, ILERI, PUBLISHED IN KOMOTINI, ONE OF THE TWO PRINCIPAL CENTERS OF MUSLIM POPULATION IN THRACE, IS REPORTED IN THE THESSALONIKI PRESS TO HAVE BEGUN PUBLISHING ARTICLES ALLEGING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GREEK MUSLIMS. (FULL TEXT OF GREEK ARTICLE BEING TRANSMITTED SEPTEL.) THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT MEMORY THAT WE HAVE SEEN PRESS ACCOUNTS OF ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GREEK MUSLIMS WHICH HAVE ORIGINATED IN GREECE. NORMALLY, ACCOUNTS OF THIS SORT ARE SARCASTIC REWRITES OF ARTICLES ALLEGED TO HAVE APPEARED IN TURKISH PRESS. EVEN IN THIS CASE, GREEK ACCOUNT OF ILERI ARTICLE SEEKS TO DISCREDIT IT, BUT FACT REMAINS CHARGES WERE ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN GREECE.

2. ILERI CHARGES THAT GREEK MUSLIMS ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BY REFUSAL OF GREEK AUTHORITIES TO ISSUE LICENSES FOR TRACTORS OR TO APPOINT TURKISH TEACHERS TO SCHOOLS. ALLEGATIONS ARE REMINISCENT OF STATEMENTS MADE TO ME BY TURKISH CONGEN DURING COURSE OF COURTESY CALL LAST NOV 25 TO EFFECT THAT GOG ENGAGES IN VARIOUS KINDS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST TURKISH MINORITY IN NORTHERN GREECE.

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3. WHILE VERIFYING REPORTS OF THIS KIND IS OF COURSE A
SENSITIVE MATTER, WE WILL REMAIN ALERT TO ANY FURTHER
INDICATIONS THAT THIS ISSUE MAY BE HEADED FOR ONE OF ITS PERIODIC
FLARE-UPS.
NEGROPONTE

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